

Importance of Small Group Learning in Development of the 4Cs

Today's students must be proficient communicators, creators, thinkers, and collaborators.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) was founded to encourage a shared vision for education that helps prepare students for college, work, and life. Within the framework, P21 established the 4Cs: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication.

Small group learning lets students put their 4C skills into action more than other learning environments and empowers learners to work together to achieve a common goal.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking enables the ability to compare, evaluate, innovate, and make sensible decisions by seeking the truth.

In small groups, critical thinking encourages curiosity, the exploration of new ideas, and to view problems/solutions in different ways, enabling practical reasoning and improved problem-solving skills.



Creativity

Creativity teaches students to think outside the box, to look at a problem from multiple perspectives, and to try new approaches to get things done.

Healthily and productively expressing creativity in small groups can be especially contagious, and motivate students to share, inspiring others to think in a way that's unique to them.



Collaboration

Collaboration shows students how to work together to achieve a common goal while generating knowledge for a more significant number of people.

In a student-centered learning environment—balanced with teacher facilitation/encouragement—students learn to listen and collaborate, generating more holistic results than individual efforts alone.



Communication

Practical communications skills enable students to articulate thoughts, convey their ideas, and listen in a way that allows them to decipher meaning.

Students can more readily develop essential communication skills in small groups, including active listening, how to read a room, and more.



Small group learning helps to address gaps in a student's 4C skills by promoting engagement, sharing, and feedback between learners of differing perspectives and backgrounds while fostering problem-solving through teamwork.

At Lightspeed, we understand the challenges of facilitating active small group learning. That's why we created Activate - a tool for teachers to facilitate successful small group learning. With Activate, teachers can assess where to invest time, provide support at the right moment, and gain insights into the learning process without changing the group dynamic.